

OPTIMAL CODE GENERATION FOR STRUCTURED ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

The present invention relates to assembly language programming in general, and in particular to structured assembly language programming. Still more particularly, the present invention relates to an optimal code generator for generating structured assembly language expressions utilized in structured assembly language programming.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Structured assembly language programming is an improvement to the basic syntax of conventional assembly language programming. In essence, structured assembly language programming allows the usage of structured programming constructs, such as if-elseif-else-endif, while-endwhile, repeat-until, etc., similar to those generally found in high-level programming languages such as Pascal or C. At the core of each structured assembly language construct is a structured assembly language expression. Examples of structured assembly language expressions in mnemonic form includes

```
r0 <eq> r1  
<z>  
(w0 <le> #0xFF) && !(w2 <ne> w4)
```

Each structured assembly language expression results in code being generated, and the generated code should be optimal, which means:

1. minimum number of instructions should be generated;
2. structured assembly language expression should be evaluated in reading order;
3. structured assembly language expression operators should follow standard precedence rules, such as logical AND evaluated before logical OR;
4. execution should exit an expression as soon as the expression is known to be true or false; and
5. the generated code for an expression should be located where the expression appears within the entire program, otherwise, it will be difficult to use labels with structured assembly language constructs.

Historically, logical functions and arithmetic functions are combined and processed by a stack machine based algorithm. The usage of a stack machine algorithm in a compiler for expression evaluation is very flexible. However, the stack machine implementation does not necessarily result in optimal code, and the fact that the stack machine implementation is non-optimal makes it unsuitable for evaluating/generating code for structured assembly language expressions. Another mechanism utilized in a compiler for expression evaluation is through repeated use of the DeMorgan's Theorem (*i.e.*, $!(A \&\& B) = !A \parallel !B$), which can be used to separate a structured assembly language expression into a series of logical AND statements. However, the DeMorgan's Theorem implementation is also non-optimal. Consequently, it would be desirable to provide an optimal code generator for generating structured assembly language expressions utilized in structured assembly language programming.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, an optimal code generator for generating structured assembly language expressions utilized in structured assembly language programming includes a program code means for recognizing unit structured assembly language expressions and for combining structured assembly language expressions into higher order structured assembly language expressions. Structured assembly language expressions are constructed by logically combining unit structured assembly language expressions. Because of the equivalence between unit structured assembly language expressions in mnemonic form and the code implementing those unit structured assembly language expressions, it is possible to represent complex structured assembly language expressions as a vector of unit structured assembly language expressions. A set of rules is utilized to perform logical operations on the vector representation of a structured assembly language expression without introducing changes that result in non-optimal code. Using the equivalence between the code and unit structured assembly language expressions allows the vector representation of a structured assembly language expression to be translated directly into assembly code.

All objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent in the following detailed written description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 The invention itself, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objects, and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of an assembler according to the prior art;

10 Figure 2 is a block diagram of an assembler in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

15 Figure 3 is a table that indicates a set of typical condition codes and their respective complementary condition codes;

Figure 4 is a table of condition codes illustrating how to overload a condition code to select a comparison opcode in a unit structured assembly language expression;

20 Figure 5 is a table of condition code mnemonics and their respective descriptions; and

Figure 6 is a block diagram of a computer system in which a preferred embodiment of the present invention can be implemented.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now to the drawings and, in particular, to Figure 1, there is depicted a block diagram of an assembler according to the prior art. As shown, an assembler 30 includes an assembler parser 31, an assembler expression tree/stack 32, and an assembler code generator 33. After processing user source code files, assembler 10 generates binary output files and listing files.

With reference now to Figure 2, there is depicted a block diagram of an assembler in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. As shown, an assembler 40 includes an assembler parser 41 and a vector-representation assembler code generator 42. Similar to assembler 30 from Figure 1, assembler 40 generates output files based on user source files. Compared with the prior art assembler 30 shown in Figure 1, the present invention replaces compiler-like assembler expression tree/stack 32 and assembler code generator 33 with vector-representation assembler code generator 42. A vector-representation assembler code generator 42 provides assembler 40 with the ability to generate optimal code for structured assembly language expressions. A vector-representation assembler code generator 42 preferably generates structured assembly language code in accordance with four rules, namely, Rule #1, Rule #2, Rule #3, and Rule #4, as will be explained further in detail.

The simplest structured assembly language expression's mnemonics has the form:

arg1a <cc> arg1b

where

arg1a, arg1b are valid arguments for the comparison opcodes available; and

cc is a condition code for a branch opcode for selecting a comparison opcode.

Rule #1 states that there is an equivalence between the simplest form of a structured assembly language expression's mnemonics and its generated code. The generated code for implementing the above-mentioned structured assembly language expression has the following form:

```
      cmp arg1,arg2
      b!cc next_or
next_and: ;if
next_or:  ;else
```

As shown, the generated code includes the following four items:

1. a selected comparison opcode (typically cmp or tst opcodes) for a given condition code;
2. a branch on the complementary condition code;
3. a branch location or label, such as next_and, for execution to proceed at if the expression is true; and
4. a branch location or label, such as next_or, for execution to proceed at if the expression is false.

It should be noted that:

1. there is always a complementary condition code. For example, the complimentary condition code for "less than" is "greater than or equal to." An example of complementary condition code pairs is shown in Figure 3; and

2. the next_and label is usually located immediately after the expression such that the execution can continue immediately after the expression when the expression is true, and the last branch of the expression is not taken.

5 The above-mentioned structured assembly language expression having two arguments is referred to as a binary structured assembly language expression. In contrast, a structured assembly language expression having only a condition code is called a unary structured assembly language expression.

10 A unary structured assembly language expression's mnemonics has the form:

<CC>

where

15 cc is a condition code for a branch opcode.

The code generated for a unary structured assembly language expression is the same as the code generated for a binary structured assembly language expression, except the comparison opcode is not generated.

20 Both binary and unary structured assembly language expressions are the smallest possible structured assembly language expressions, and can be referred to as *unit structured assembly language expressions*. A unit structured assembly language expression can preferably be represented by a *tuple*, as follows:

25 <condition code, args, branchto>

where

condition code of a tuple is overloaded to indicate both the comparison operator and the branch condition;
args, if they exist, are intended as arguments for the comparison operator;
and
branchto has three possible values, namely, a *next_and* label, a *next_or* label, or an end of the expression.

It should be noted that:

1. an example mapping of condition codes with comparison opcodes is depicted in Figure 4, and the description for the mnemonics of the condition code depicted in Figure 3 is outlined in Figure 5; and
2. the actual addresses of the *next_and* label and the *next_or* label do not belong to a tuple. They belong to the structured assembly language expression as a whole because the entire structured assembly language expression, and not an individual tuple, is either true or false.

Thus, a tuple contains all the information necessary to generate assembly code for a structured assembly language expression, except for the final addresses of the *next_and* and *next_or* labels. The final addresses for the *next_and* and *next_or* labels are determined by the structured assembly language construct that the expression is in (for example, if-else-endif, while-endwhile, repeat-until).

Multiple unit structured assembly language expressions are referred to as a compound structured assembly language expression.

Rule #2 can be used to perform a logical AND between two structured assembly language expressions, *i.e.*, SA_Expr1 && SA_Expr2, to form one structured

assembly language expression, by:

1. any "branchto = next_and" for expression 1 is set to branch to the end of expression 1; and
2. form a vector by concatenating the tuples from each expression in the same order as a parser, such as parser 41 in Figure 2, encountered them.

For example, in order to assemble (arg1a <cc1> arg1b) && (arg2a <cc2> arg2b), Rule #1 is initially used to convert the structured assembly language expression's mnemonics to tuples, as follows:

```
<cc1,args1,branchto=next_or>  
    && <cc2,args2,branchto=next_or>
```

Rule #2 is then used to convert the logical AND of tuples to a single compound structured assembly language expression, which is a vector of tuples as follows:

```
<cc1,args1,branchto=next_or>  
<cc2,args2,branchto=next_or>
```

Rule #1 is used again to allow conversion of the vector of tuples to the following code:

```
                cmp arg1a,arg1b  
                b!cc1 next_or  
                cmp arg2a,arg2b  
                b!cc2 next_or  
next_and:      ;if  
next_or:       ;else
```

In a similar fashion, Rule #3 can be used to perform a logical OR between two structured assembly expressions, *i.e.*, SA_Expr1 || SA_Expr2, to form one structured assembly language expression, by:

1. any "branchto = next_or" for expression 1, except for the last tuple of expression 1, is set to branch to the end of expression 1;
2. the condition code for the last tuple of expression 1 is complemented;
3. the branch label for the last tuple of expression 1 is complemented (*i.e.*, next_or becomes next_and, next_and becomes next_or, otherwise, no change); and
4. form a vector by concatenating the tuples from each expression in the same order as a parser, such as parser 41 in Figure 2, encountered them.

For example, in order to assemble (arg3a <cc3> arg3b) || (arg4a <cc4> arg4b), Rule #1 is initially used to convert the mnemonics to tuples, as follows:

```
<cc3,args3,branchto=next_or>  
|| <cc4,args4,branchto=next_or>
```

Rule #3 is then used to convert the logical OR of tuples to a single compound structured assembly expression, which is a vector of tuples as follows:

```
<!cc3,args3,branchto=next_and>  
<cc4,args4,branchto=next_or>
```

Rule #1 is used again to allow conversion of the vector of tuples to the following code:

```

        cmp arg3a,arg3b
        bcc3 next_and
        cmp arg4a,arg4b
        b!cc4 next_or
5      next_and:  ;if
      next_or:   ;else

```

To extend this example a step further, consider logically ORing together the expressions from the two previous examples, that is:

```

( (arg1a <cc1> arg1b) && (arg2a <cc2> arg2b) )
  || ( (arg3a <cc3> arg3b) || (arg4a <cc4> arg4b) )

```

In tuple notation, the above expression becomes the vector of tuples:

```

<cc1,args1,branchto=end_of_tuple2>
<!cc2,args2,branchto=next_and>
<!cc3,args3,branchto=next_and>
<cc4,args4,branchto=next_or>

```

By using Rule #1, the code for the above tuple is as follows:

```

        cmp arg1a,arg1b
        b!cc1 end_of_tuple2
        cmp arg2a,arg2b
        bcc2 next_and
25      end_of_tuple2:
        cmp arg3a,arg3b
        bcc3 next_and
        cmp arg4a,arg4b
        b!cc4 next_or
30      next_and:    ;if
      next_or:      ;else

```

Rule #4 can be used to logically negate a structured assembly language expression, *i.e.*, !SA_Expr, to form a structured assembly language expression, by:

1. the branch label for all tuples in expression 1, except for the last tuple is

complimented (*i.e.*, next_or becomes next_and, next_and become next_or, otherwise, no change); and

2. the condition code for the last tuple of the expression is inverted.

For example, in order to assemble the negated version of the previous structured assembly language expression, that is,

```
!( (arg1a <cc1> arg1b) && (arg2a <cc2> arg2b))
  || ((arg3a <cc3> arg3b) || (arg4a <cc4> arg4b)) )
```

The vector of tuples for the previous example and Rule #4 are used to yield a vector of tuples, as follows:

```
<cc1,args1,branchto = end_of_tuple2>
<!cc2,args2,branchto = next_or>
<!cc3,args3,branchto = next_or>
<!cc4,args4,branchto = next_or>
```

Rule #1 is then used to allow conversion of the vector of tuples to the following code:

```

                                cmp arg1a,arg1b
                                b!cc1 end_of_tuple2
                                cmp arg2a,arg2b
                                bcc2 next_or
end_of_tuple2:
                                cmp arg3a,arg3b
                                bcc3 next_or
                                cmp arg4a,arg4b
                                bcc4 next_or
next_and:
                                ;if
next_or:
                                ;else
```

The vector of tuples is a unique representation of a structured assembly language expression, and works with some very unique rules for mechanical manipulation

of vectors of tuples to generate optimal code for all structured assembly language expressions. The four rules of the present invention are not mathematically derived (*i.e.*, cannot be designed by a logic circuit designer). The rules are trivial to implement given the representation of a unit structured assembly language expression. The key to the rules is that the last tuple of a structured assembly language expression is special, and to avoid sub-optimal behavior can never take the form "bcc next_and," which would be a jump to the next instruction.

An assembler capable of processing structured assembly programming language may be executed in a variety of data processing systems under a number of different operating systems. The computer may be, for example, a personal computer, a midrange computer or a mainframe computer. In addition, the computer may be a stand-alone system or part of a network such as a local-area network (LAN) or a wide-area network (WAN).

With reference now to Figure 6, there is depicted a block diagram of a computer system 10 in which a preferred embodiment of the present invention can be implemented. As shown, a processor 12, a read-only memory (ROM) 13, and a random access memory (RAM) 14 are connected to a system bus 11. Processor 12, ROM 13, and RAM 14 are also coupled to a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bus 20 of computer system 10 through a PCI host bridge 16. PCI host bridge 16 provides a low latency path through which processor 12 may directly access PCI devices mapped anywhere within bus memory and/or I/O address spaces. PCI host bridge 16 also provides a high bandwidth path allowing PCI devices to directly access RAM 14. In addition, an audio adapter 23 and a graphics adapter 21 may be attached to PCI bus 20. Graphics adapter 21 controls visual output through a video monitor 22 and audio adapter 20 controls audio output through a speaker 24. Also attached to PCI bus 20 is a communications adapter 15 and a small computer system interface (SCSI) 18. Communications adapter 15 connects computer

5 system 10 to a local-area network (LAN) 17. SCSI 18 is utilized to control a high-speed SCSI disk drive 19. Expansion bus bridge 29, such as a PCI-to-ISA bus bridge, may be utilized for coupling an industry standard architecture (ISA) bus 25 to PCI bus 20. As shown, a keyboard 26 and a mouse 28 are attached to ISA bus 25 for performing certain basic I/O functions.

As has been described, the present invention provides an optimal code generator for generating structured assembly language expressions utilized in structured assembly language programming.

10 It is also important to note that although the present invention has been described in the context of a fully functional computer system, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the mechanisms of the present invention are capable of being distributed as a program product in a variety of forms, and that the present invention applies equally
15 regardless of the particular type of signal bearing media utilized to actually carry out the distribution. Examples of signal bearing media include, without limitation, recordable type media such as floppy disks or CD ROMs and transmission type media such as analog or digital communications links.

20 While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to a preferred embodiment, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.